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Western Reserve and Northern Ohio Historical Society—Tract No. 63.
NOVEMBER, 1884.

—THE—

Geographical History of Ohio.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE

ANNUAL REUNION OF THE PIONEERS OF THE
MAHONING VALLEY AT YOUNGSTOWN,
SEPTEMBER 10, 1880,

—BY—

C. C. BALDWIN.

Reprinted from the Magazine of Western History,
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THE GEOGRAPHICAL HISTORY OF OHIO.

When Columbus found America it was supposed he had reached the eastern coast of Asia. As discovery progressed, names intended for that continent were strung along the Atlantic. One of them, the West Indies, to-day reminds us of the error, as well as Indian, the common name for the aborigines.

It was by and by suspected that America was not Asia, but it was a long time before the reality of a vast continent was understood. Succeeding learned men made it consist of two very long and narrow bodies of land.

South America, coasted by Cape Horn, was first delineated with some accuracy, but North America not until very much later. The feeble colonies along the Atlantic grew slowly, and not until two hundred and fifty years did they really begin to push over the mountains, and there met other colonies from the interior of the continent. The South Sea trade led to many voyages of discovery, and many energetic captains sailed up and down the coast striving and continually hoping to find some strait to the supposed near coast of Asia.

We, in our day, read the early voyages as if the enterprising men who conducted them were voyaging purely for science and adventure, but, then, as now, business was energetic and commerce was reaching out its hands in every direction for larger profits. Only once did a romantic chevalier search for the visionary fountain of youth, and he may have thought that bottled it would be the most popular of mineral waters, and there were "millions in it."

Cartier entered the Gulf of St. Lawrence in 1534, but

returned to France to get a new outfit to pursue the new sea channel to the west. The next year he entered the river, but still looked for a passage to Asia. He thought deep Saguenay led to the Northern Sea and continued up the St. Lawrence. Stopped by the rapids he was the first European who made the tour of the mountain, and named the place "Mount Royal."

The Indians reported to Cartier that there were three large lakes and a sea of fresh water without end, meaning, no doubt, lakes of middle New York and Ontario Sea. Cartier and his king, the great Francis, supposed he was in Asia.

In a mercator map of 1569, the St. Lawrence is represented draining all the Upper Mississippi valley, while to the north-west is the eastern end of a vast fresh water sea (*dulce aquarium*) some five hundred or six hundred miles wide, of the extent of which the Indians of Canada, learning of it from the Indians of Saguenay, are ignorant. It looks on the map like Lake Huron, but careful geographers dropped this unfounded report of a great lake, and rightly. The Saguenay Indians no doubt meant the Lake St. John.

Quebec was settled in 1608. In 1615 Champlain reached Lake Huron by way of Ottawa River. On his return he crossed the lower end of Ontario, and met in battle the Iroquois. His allies, the Hurons, wished him to wait for five hundred men from the Eries, the tribe from which our lake took its name. His interpreter, Brulé, visited them and descended the Susquehanna to salt water, and is supposed to have visited the lake; I doubt it. He did not need to cross it to return to the French, and he could hardly have stood on the lake and seen its broad expanse. He reported to Champlain, who, in 1632, made the first map of the lakes. Lake Erie, unnamed, is little but a wide irregular river from Lake Huron, (*Mer Douce*) to Ontario (*Lac St. Louis*). Champlain's ideas of Erie were more likely derived from the north, where Long Point and islands make it look narrower than it does from the south.

The maps of other nations for a long time after show no practical knowledge of the interior, being quite constant dif-

ferences in grossest blunders. But in the meantime the French—"shut up," says the English geographer, Heylin, "in a few weak forts on the north of Canada,"—were really by missionaries and teachers, pushing far into the interior. The Jesuit map of Lake Superior, of 1671, is wonderful. In a map published by the Royal Geographer Sanson, in Paris in 1669, Lake Erie is not far from its true shape, and lake Chautauqua appears with a small stream—meant, I think, for a little of the Ohio, known from Indian report.

It is worth while to stop for a moment to glance at the then position of our State. Between it and the east are the Alleghanies, in those days a great natural barrier, and not inaptly called "Endless Mountains." It was to be nearly one hundred years before the whites were to cross them, proposing to drive away the French, but really to meet the most disastrous defeat of Braddock's field.

At the south was a broad river separating from Kentucky, and not until still later and many a "dark and bloody" fight was Virginia to assert its empire over an unknown northwest by calling it "Illinois county." Nor was New York to discover Ohio. All along through western New York, and controlling the easiest avenues, were the Iroquois, the "Romans of the new world," the conquerors of Ohio, who submitted to neither the English nor the French, and who long asserted an equality with either. The French were more sociable with Indians, but the introduction of the Iroquois to civilization was a battle with Champlain in 1608, which made the Hurons friends of the French, but lost them the conquerors of the Hurons.

The French had been pursuing their occupation, such as it was, over the peninsula north of Lake Erie, and established several posts around Lakes Superior and Huron and at Detroit, where was carried on a valuable trade. The routes north of the lakes or by the Ottawa, were the shortest, easiest and much the safest. All the while they were looking for larger things and full of schemes. Rumors of great rivers reached them, including some report of that which started from the country of

the Iroquois and gathered strength for its immense unknown course through distant lands.

No more resolute discoverer than La Salle ever came to New France. A young man, only twenty-three, he was of good family; lost his inheritance by joining the Jesuits, but had given up his intention of becoming a priest. One can see, however, that he had imbibed their enthusiasm for geographical extension, and turned to designs for commerce and the kind their zeal for their order. His whole life is so harmonious in its unity that it gives color to the suggestion of Mr. Parkman that he had planned it before he came. He had a grant at once, through the influence of his brother, at La Chine, named, it is said, in ridicule of his plans for a route to China. He palisaded it, traded in furs, and studied with industry the Indian tongues, learning, it is said, seven or eight. The Indians who came there talked of the Ohio, a grand river which rose near Lake Erie, but after a journey requiring eight or nine months to follow, emptied into a vast sea. La Salle believed the sea to be the Gulf of California, then thought to communicate, by a broad passage at its north, with the ocean. Here was the passage to the commerce of the South Sea and valuable trade with nations along its banks. In 1667 he asked to be allowed to discover it. He had the privilege, but his company was merged with that of two missionaries, Galinée and Dollier. With them, in 1669, he visited the Iroquois. The river was in its old place, but the Iroquois were not inclined to have the Frenchmen penetrate their country, intercept their trade and supply the nations to their rear with the fire arms which made the Iroquois themselves omnipotent in battle.

They talked of the long, hard journey—almost impossible; of the Andastes, a terrible nation almost sure to kill them, and the still more terrible Shawnees. The courage of the missionaries failed them, and La Salle was obliged to turn with them to the north.

There has lately been published in Paris, by M. Margry, a series of documents which add much to our knowledge of him

In these volumes appear his plans, expenses, poverty, drafts upon his family and friends; how he built upon Lake Ontario and Niagara, and planned to build on Lake Erie and further west.

In 1667 he was in France. He was already famous and of influence. His scheme was vast. He wished to penetrate to the great valley of our continent and lay there the foundation of powerful colonies "in a country temperate in climate, rich and fertile, and capable of a great commerce." He told the king "such a hold of the continent would be taken, that in the next war with Spain, France would oust her from North America." He was graciously allowed to pursue this vast enterprise, provided he did so at his own expense.

In 1679 he built the Griffin, the first vessel upon Lake Erie. He founded Fort Miamis upon the river St. Joseph, in southwest Michigan, and Fort Crèvecœur upon the Illinois, intending to there build a vessel to descend the Mississippi. The Griffin returned to bring supplies. He never saw her again. She was lost, he believed, by treachery, and he must return for succor. Arrived overland at Niagara, he found he had also lost a vessel with supplies from France. He reached Montreal May 6, 1680. His creditors had seized his property and his resources seemed entirely wasted. He learned by letter from Tonty, that the men left at Crèvecœur had deserted after destroying the fort, carrying away what property they could and destroying the balance. They also destroyed Fort St. Joseph and seized his property at Niagara. But La Salle was not disheartened. He started to succor Tonty and save the vessel on the Illinois. As he reached Crèvecœur, in the winter of 1680, all was silent; the planks of the vessel were there and on one was written "*Nous sommes tous sauvages: ce 19, A. 1680.*" Was it prophetic that he had named the place Crèvecœur (Broken Heart)? Not at all. His first thought was, did A. stand for April or August, and where was Tonty. The resolute will and wonderful power of La Salle appear nowhere so strongly as in the narrative of the Illinois. There seems almost a direct triumph of mind over matter. He found Tonty at Michilimack-

inac, and in 1682-3 accomplished his purpose of descending the Mississippi to the sea. He returned up the river and to France, and in 1685 was in a sea expedition to found a colony at its mouth. The captain, against his protest, carried him by and landed him in Texas. He still persisted, with the men left with him, in the resolve to find the Mississippi, with great suffering and opposition on their part, but not at all daunted himself. A part of them revolted from the enterprise, and one of them shot La Salle, exclaiming: "Lie there Grand Bashaw," and that resolute will was still.

Such was the man, who, almost at the outset of his career, and when hardly twenty-seven, discovered the Ohio. There are no journals or maps of that discovery, and I have traced the man to enable us to judge of the manner in which he no doubt pursued that project. We left him with Galinée in 1669, sadly turning to the north. Of the captive guides furnished by the Iroquois, he got a Shawnee from Ohio, and persisted in wishing to seek that river. He shortly separated from the expedition. The opposition which we have related was not all. The Jesuits were jealous of his schemes—the only ones more vast and energetic than their own. Frontenac, the governor, says: "Their design, as appeared in the end, was to set a trap whichever path I took, or to derange everything; to place the country in disorder, from which they would not hesitate to profit and to ruin M. de La Salle."

Their annual reports are the main reliance for early Canadian history, and they purposely and sagaciously omitted all mention of his enterprises or discoveries, or even his name.

Until within a few years it has been said that La Salle did nothing for the next two or three years after he left Galinée. With such a man that was impossible. We have the briefest knowledge of what he did. His reports and his maps, known to be in existence as late as 1756, are apparently hopelessly lost. In the papers publishing at Paris is one resulting from conversations with La Salle in 1677, when he was in France, a too brief narrative. It sets forth La Salle's resolve to turn to

the south; that Galinée, a missionary, hoped to do good in the north, and in this hope left our hero. **“However,”* says the narrative, *“M. de La Salle continued his journey on a river which goes from the east to the west, and passed to Onontague, then to six or seven leagues below from Lake Erie, and having reached longitude 280 to 283 degrees, and latitude 41, found a rapid which falls to the west in a low, marshy country, all covered with dry trees, some of which were still standing. He was compelled to take to land, and following a height which led him away, he found some Indians who told him that far off the river lost itself in the lower country, and reunited again in one stream. He continued on the journey, but as the fatigue was great, twenty-three or twenty-four men, which he had brought there, left him by night, returned up the river and saved themselves, some in New York and some in New England.*

**“He was alone, four hundred leagues from home, where he returned, ascending the river and living on game, plants, and what was given him by the Indians.*

**“After some time he made a second attempt, on the same river,”* which he left below Lake Erie, making a portage of six or seven leagues to embark on that lake, which he left towards the north, going through Lake St. Clair. La Salle himself says in a letter of 1677: *“That year, 1667, and those following he made several expensive journeys, in which he discovered the first time the country south of the great lakes, and between them and the great river Ohio. He followed it to a strait, where it fell into great marshes, below 37° latitude.”*

A letter from M. Talon to the king, dated November 2, 1671, says: *“Sieur de La Salle has not yet returned from his journey to the southward of this country.”*

A memoir of M. de DeNonville, March 8, 1688, says: *“La Salle had for several years before he built Crèvecoeur, employed canoes for his trade in the rivers Oyo, Oubache and others in*

*NOTE.—A more full discussion of these passages, by Colonel Charles Whittlesey, will be found in Tract No. 38 of the Historical Society, at Cleveland.

the surrounding neighborhood, which flow into the river Mississippi."

A plain meaning of all this is that La Salle entered the Ohio near or at one of its sources, I believe at Lake Chataqua, six or seven leagues below Lake Erie, and followed it to Louisville. He was engaged in the beaver trade, and in 1671 had a credit at Montreal, payable in beaver. We may be pretty confident that, with his twenty-three or twenty-four men and several canoes, looking for beaver-skins, he did not neglect the Mahoning River, first called Beaver creek.

La Salle's latitude is bad; we would expect that. Joliet's manuscript map of 1674 lays down the Ohio marked "Route of the Sieur de La Salle to go to Mexico." The unpublished map of Franquelin of 1688 lays down the Ohio more correctly than it appeared in published maps for sixty years. The discovery was the basis of the French claims to Ohio, and La Salle's likeness is one of the four great discoverers of America in the Capitol at Washington. But the knowledge gained by La Salle to be in a great measure lost. The English, stopped by Indians and mountains, were not to settle here. The west and northwest were safer territory for the French. The Iroquois roamed over Ohio, warred with the tribes beyond, even to the Mississippi. The Wabash and Ohio became confounded, often laid down as "Wabash or Ohio," and most often made running almost parallel with the lake and just about on the high land in Ohio which divides the streams of the north from the south. The magnificent sweep of the Ohio, which embraces our State on the east and south, was lost. The lake had various fortunes. La Hontan made it run down like a great bag half way to the Gulf, but that being in time changed, its south shore was drawn nearly east and west instead of to the southwest westward. No subsequent French writer was so sensible and intelligent as Charlevoix, yet in his great work of three quarto-volumes on New France our territory hardly appears, and on the south of Lake Erie in his larger map of it, in 1744, is the

legend: "*Toute cette coste n'est presque point connue*"—this coast is almost unknown.

As early as 1716 the governor of Virginia proposed to the home Government to seize the interior. No attention was paid to it, but about 1750 Pennsylvania traders were pushing over the mountains and the French traders from the west. In that year the Ohio Land Company sent Gist to survey the Ohio. English traders were shortly after at Pickowilliny, Sandusky and Pittsburgh, but not safely so. The French were the strongest. In 1749 Celeron placed his lead plates on the Ohio. In 1753 the French crossed Lake Erie, established Presque Isle and expelled the English from Fort DuQuesne at Pittsburgh. Washington made his appearance to know what the French were doing. The traders had made no addition to science or geography, but they had called attention to the country. But the military expeditions were to rediscover it.

Celeron's map lays down the Ohio quite creditably, but the legend along the lake is: "All this part of the lake is unknown." Just the mouth of the Beaver appears. He expelled English traders from Logstown, a little above the Beaver. The great geographer, D'Anville of France, in 1755 lays down the Beaver, with the Mahoning from the west, rising in a lake, all very incorrectly, with Lake Erie rising to the northeast like a pair of stairs and the Ohio nearly parallel to it.

The map published in 1754 with Washington's report takes good account of Great Beaver creek—Logstown just above it; opposite, on the Ohio, a fort; Delawares on the west at the mouth; Kuskuskas above; and above that, Owendos' town, "Wyandot." This is the first representation of your river, as far as I know. The mixed state of the Indians at that time appears in Celeron, who found in Logstown Iroquois from different places, Shawnees, Delawares, also Nepissings, Abenakes and Ottawas.

Being a convenient way of passing to the lake, a trail as an avenue of commerce preceded the canal, and that the railroad.

Evans was to draw and Franklin to publish, in 1755, at Phil-

adelphia, a map plainly in demand by traders, and from information given by them. At the mouth of the Beaver is a Shingoes' town; a trail up to the forks finds the Kuskuskas; a trail to the east leaves it for "Wenango" and "Petroleum;" the trail to the west goes to "Salt Springs," and where farther does not appear.

In his "Analysis," Mr. Evans says: "Beaver creek is navigable with canoes only. At Kushkies, about sixteen miles up, two branches spread opposite ways—one interlocks with French creek and Cherage, the other westward with Muskingum and Cuyahoga. On this are many salt springs about thirty-five miles above the forks. It is canoeable about twenty miles farther. The eastern branch is less considerable, but both are very slow, spreading through a very rich, level country, full of swamps and ponds which prevent a good portage, but will no doubt in future ages be fit to open a canal between the waters of the Ohio and Lake Erie."

A map often reprinted, and the one which was made the basis of the treaty of peace after the Revolution, was that of John Mitchell, London, 1755.

Kushkies is said to be the "chief town of the Six Nations on the Ohio, an English factory." On the east branch are "Owendots." Pennsylvania reaches its protection over the whole of the Mahoning.

My purpose to outline discovery is nearly ended. In 1760, with Quebec, all New France was surrendered to the English, but new wars with Indians were to follow. Hutchins, Geographer-General to the United States, who introduced our admirable land system, was with Bouquet in 1764. On his map, between Kuskuske and Salt Lick Town, on the west of the river, appears "Mahoning Town," the first appearance in the maps of the name.

The subsequent history of Ohio is familiar. That of the Reserve grew out of that ignorance which supposed the continent narrow. King Charles granted in 1660 to Connecticut a tract seventy miles wide and over three thousand long. The money

for the Reserve became the school fund of Connecticut, and led by the example, to our admirable system of free schools, so that the ignorance of years ago leads to the wisdom of this.

" There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough hew them as we will."

The error of making the south shore of Lake Erie east and west came to a curious end. When the association of gentlemen known as the Connecticut Land Company were about to buy the Reserve, they agreed with a prospective competitor to let it have the excess over three million acres. This was the Excess Company, but there was no land for it, and the error of one hundred years led to considerable financial disaster.

I ought to mention, as a matter of curious history, the map of John Fitch, of steamboat memory. He spent considerable time in surveys within the bounds of Ohio and Kentucky, and had previously traveled the country as a prisoner among the Indians. In 1785 he made a map of the "Northwest Country," containing original and accurate information. He prepared the copper plate, engraved it himself, and printed it with a cider press. He was then living in Bucks county, Pa., and sold the map at six shillings per copy to raise money enough to pursue his inventions relating to steamboats.

We have now reached the period of settlement and can take a retrospect.

From the discovery of the continent in 1494 it was one hundred and seventy-five years to the pioneer discovery of Ohio. In eighty-five years more both France and England set to work in earnest to make good their claims to it. In thirty-four years more England had beaten France, America had beaten England, and the first permanent settlement had been made in Ohio. It took two hundred and ninety-four years to reach this point. There are but ninety-two years left to 1880 for the pioneers of Ohio; but what a fruition to their work! The solitary settlement has become a mighty nation of three million people, as large as the whole United States in the Revolution, and how much stronger and with what an abundance of wealth

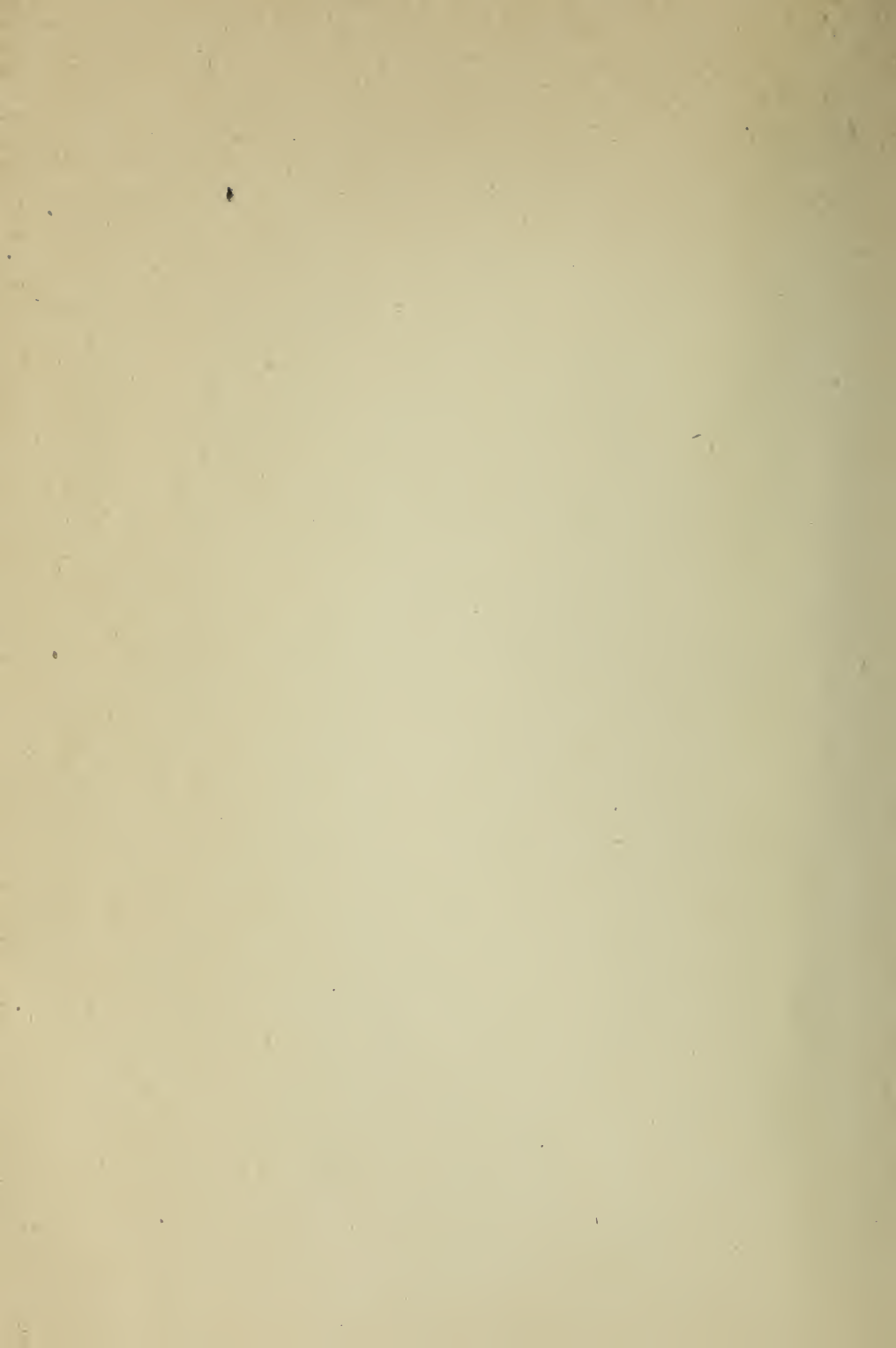
and comfort—a centre of intelligence and the home of Presidents!

It is a wonderful review. The pioneers found the State covered with large forests, almost without exception requiring the severest labor to remove; and the change, all within a possible lifetime, seems amazing. The world cannot show its parallel, and when one thinks seriously it will be found to be one of the most interesting and important events in the history of man.

Peace as well as war has its victories. Yours is only one of many pioneer associations. It has been directed with unusual wisdom, and by the pen and press you are making permanent record of life and its changes in this great movement, so that your descendants and successors shall know something of that past, nearest and most interesting to them.

We can only live over in stories the life of the pioneers. But theirs was sturdy independence and severe labor, with least encouragement, and

"Haply from them the toiler, bent
Above his targe or plow, may gain
A manlier spirit of content,
And feel that life is wisest spent
Where the strong working hand makes strong the working brain."



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